127. Muslim Education.

Mr. N. A. Mahomed Kunju (Member, Nominated) represented that, since it was essential for the Mahomedans to be conversant with Arabic, the language in which their religious works were written, all facilities should be afforded to Mahomedan youths to learn Arabic at the commencement of their school course. Although the matter was urged on the attention of Government for the last ten years, no satisfactory solution had been reached till now and the main provisions of G. O. No. 1989, dated the 31st May 1919, which did not fully satisfy their requirements, had not been given effect to, though three years had elapsed since orders were passed. The Member said that there were nearly one thousand Maqtabs with a strength of some 30,000 Mahomedan pupils in different parts of the country for the teaching of Arabic, and that, if the Government were to give the conveniences required for the introduction of the lessons of the Primary School course in these Maqtabs, there would be some material improvement in the educational position of Mahomedans in the near future.

Regarding the teaching of Arabic, there appeared to be a misunderstanding that Arabic-teaching in Primary schools was religious teaching since the Koran was taught there. The fact was that reading was practised through the Koran in those schools, while in Middle and English schools the Arabic language was taught. The hours of teaching of the Koran next engaged the Member's attention. Orders were recently issued to the effect that, even in schools where the majority of the pupils were Mahomedans, the teaching of the Koran should be conducted out of school hours, and that, in primary schools, classes I and II and classes III and IV should be clubbed together for that purpose. As these orders worked great hardship on the pupils concerned, the pupils of the various classes should be taught separately, and in purely Mahomedan schools, Arabic should be included in the regular time-table and taught like other subjects within school hours, while in mixed schools, Mahomedan pupils might be taught Arabic during the periods fixed for the teaching of unimportant subjects such as recitation and drill.

The Member then said that, during the last two years, several grant-in-aid Mahomedan schools were started, but that the managers thereof were put to great difficulty on account of the fact that grants were not awarded to Arabic Munshies, and he observed that owing to this several existing schools would have to be closed and new schools would not be forthcoming. The increase of only 1,500 Mahomdan boys in the strength during the last two years was not very encouraging. The fact was that, owing to the absence of proper facilities for the teaching of Arabic in Primary schools, most Mahomedan boys preferred to join the Maqtabs. With a view to avoid this evil, he suggested that full-time Abraic Munshies might be appointed as far as possible and that so far as grant-in-aid Mahomedan schools were concerned, the rule that there should be 25 pupils in a class for the award of grant should not be strictly enforced.

In regard to the qualifications required for Arabic Munshies, the Member thought that no examination qualification should be insisted on in the case of Arabic Munshies of Primary schools and that a certificate from the Mahomedan Inspector that they knew how to read and write Arabic well should suffice. In the case of Arabic Munshies of Vernacular Middle Schools, the existing test was quite necessary. But the Arabic Munshies of English Schools should possess a higher examination qualification. An examination should be instituted for these Munshies with a board for conducting it, and the teachers appointed on probation last year should be confirmed only on passing this examination.

The scales of pay fixed for the Arabic Munshies of Vernacular Middle schools and English schools were, he said, very low, and that it was a legitimate source of grievance to them that their scales of pay were below those of Malayalam and Sanskrit Munshies. Some who had passed the Arabic Examinations were not given any appointment and that was the reason why there were very few applicants for the examination this year.

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Though a Mahomedan Inspector was appointed some time ago, his duties and responsibilities were not defined and that was unsatisfactory. He should be granted all powers in regard to the teaching of Arabic and his scale of pay, travelling allowance and status should be raised. His recommendations in regard to grant-in-aid Mamomedan schools should be accepted.

The Member then complained that the whole of the allotment in the Budget for Mahomedan education was not spent. The people were putting up school buildings at Karunagapalli and Edapalli. He requested that contributions might be made from Government towards those school buildings, so that they might be completed speedily. Costly buildings should not be insisted on by the Department.

He next stated that there were many *Madrasas* in different parts of the State for higher education in Arabic. He requested that these might be re-organised, with provision for the teaching of vernaculars in them. He also requested that arrangements might be made for giving a course of training to the Arabic Munshies.

In regard to the Muslim Hostel, Trivandrum, the Member said that the amount of grant-in-aid given was very small and that, if a higher grant was given, the hostel could be conducted more satisfactorily with accommodation for a larger number of inmates.

Lastly, the Member requested that Form IV, which should have been opened even last year, might be added to the Mahomedan English Middle School at Alleppey from the beginning of the next academic year and that a sum of Rs. 1,000 might be sanctioned towards meeting the expenditure on account of repairs to the English School building. He also requested that one of the blocks of the English school buildings which was not required for the purposes of the school might be handed over to them for conducting the school proposed to be opened by them as a model school for the teaching of Arabic and for the training of those who were desirous of becoming Arabic Munshies.

Dewan's reply.—You have referred to the G. O. on Mahomedan education, issued about 3 years ago. That G. O. referred to two sets of teachers, viz., Arabic Munshies and Koran teachers. It is definitely stated in that G. O. that in Primary schools only Koran teachers need be appointed and that such teachers need not be appointed in mixed schools unless they have an attendance of at least 25 Mahomedan pupils in all classes together. In mixed Vernacular Middle Schools Arabic Munshies will be appointed under the provisions of the G. O. if there are at least 10 Mahomedan pupils. This number seems to be far too low. In pure Mahomedan schools, however, there is no difficulty whatever in regard to the teaching of the Koran or the Arabic language. We are taking the necessary action in the matter of providing all eligible mixed Middle and Primary schools with Arabic Munshies or Koran teachers, as the case may be, as far as funds permit. So far as the hours of teaching the Koran in mixed Primary schools are concerned, we thought of teaching the same out of school hours and by clubbing two classes together. This being religious teaching, we thought of doing so. You say that you do not want this kind of teaching. I am not sure whether the members of your community agree fully with what you say. In mixed schools with less than 25 Mahomedan pupils it will not be possible to allow a separate Munshi.

In regard to the pay of Koran teachers and Arabic Munshies, the proposals of the Salaries Committee have been received and will be considered.

VIII. RELIGION AND RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS.*

128. Certain improvements in the administration of Devaswoms under Sirkar management suited to present day requirements.

Mr. Kumara Pillai Padmanabha Pillai (Member, Municipal Council, Changanachery) began by saying that the Hindu temples in the State were founded for the common use of the Hindu population, that the Government on the sole

* The subjects under this head were allowed as a special case this year.

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